



Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
District of North Dakota

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Three Men Plead Guilty to Arson Charges

MINOT - Acting United States Attorney Lynn Jordheim announced that on April 13, 2010, **Troy Trottier**, 21, of Belcourt, North Dakota, **John Houle**, 21, of Belcourt, North Dakota, and on April 20, 2010, **Brock Chidester**, 19, of Rolla, North Dakota, pleaded guilty before United States District Court Judge Patrick A. Conmy to a count of conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States and six counts of arson.

On December 13, 2008, six random house fires were reported on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. Each home burned to the ground and was a total loss; no residents were present in any of the homes during the fires. Law enforcement officials received a tip about three individuals, Trottier, Houle and Chidester, who were involved in starting the fires. The men admitted entering several homes and while inside setting fire to them with a cigarette lighter.

The charge of conspiracy carries a statutory maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Each count of arson carries a statutory maximum penalty of 25 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

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The case was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs - Turtle Mountain Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Belcourt Fire Department.

Sentencing for Trottier has been scheduled for July 12, 2010, in United States District Court in Minot, North Dakota, at 10:30 a.m.

Sentencing for Houle has been scheduled for July 12, 2010, in United States District Court in Minot, North Dakota, at 11:00 a.m.

Sentencing for Chidester has been scheduled for July 12, 2010, in United States District Court in Minot, North Dakota, at 11:30 a.m.

Assistant United States Attorney Brandi Sasse Russell is prosecuting the cases.

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